

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method that enables a recipient to inform a carrier of the manner in which the recipient would like the mail delivered, said method comprises the steps of:

- depositing with the carrier mail containing the recipient's name and physical address and the sender's name and address;
- placing a unique number on the mail;
- capturing the name, physical address of the recipient and the sender, and the unique number;
- translating the name and physical address of the recipient into an e-mail address;
- notifying the recipient of the availability of the deposited mail by the unique number assigned to the mail;
- notifying the carrier of the manner in which the recipient would like the mail delivered; and
- delivering mail to the recipient in the manner specified by the recipient to the carrier.

2. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique number is placed on the mail by a postage meter before the mail is delivered to the carrier.

3. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique number is placed on the mail by a postage meter while the mail is delivered to the carrier.
4. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique number is placed on a carrier label before the mail is delivered to the carrier.
5. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique number is placed on a carrier label while the mail is delivered to the carrier.
6. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique number is preprinted on a carrier label.
7. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to deliver the mail to a specified name and address.
8. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to return the mail to the sender.
9. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to open the mail.
10. The method claimed in claim 9, further including the steps of:

informing the carrier to e-mail the contents of the mailpiece to the recipient; and

mailing by e-mail the contents of the mailpiece to the recipient.

11. The method claimed in claim 9, further including the steps of:

informing the carrier to e-mail the contents of the mailpiece to one or more specified e-mail addresses; and

mailing by e-mail the contents of the mailpiece to the specified e-mail addresses.

12. The method claimed in claim 9, further including the steps of:

informing the carrier to send by facsimile the contents of the mailpiece to the recipient; and

mailing by facsimile the contents of the mailpiece to the recipient.

13. The method claimed in claim 9, further including the steps of:

informing the carrier to facsimile the contents of the mailpiece to one or more specified facsimile numbers; and

sending by facsimile the contents of the mailpiece to the specified facsimile numbers.

14. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to deliver the mail to the recipient at a different address.

15. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to deliver the mail to the recipient by a slower delivery method than that paid for by the sender.

16. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to deliver the mail to the recipient by a faster delivery method than that paid for by the sender.

17. The method claimed in claim 1, further including the step of:  
charging the recipient for receiving notification of the availability of the deposited mail.

18. The method claimed in claim 1, further including the step of:  
charging the recipient for delivering mail to the recipient in the manner specified by the recipient to the carrier.

19. The method claimed in claim 1, further including the step of:  
charging the recipient for receiving notification of the availability of the deposited mail; and

charging the recipient for delivering mail to the recipient in the manner specified by the recipient to the carrier.

20. The method claimed in claim 1, further including the step of:

informing the sender of the delivery of the mail.

21. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to hold the mail for a specified period of time.

22. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to destroy the mail.

23. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies the carrier to recycle the material comprising the mail.

24. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient is notified via e-mail of the availability of the deposited mail.

25. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient is notified via telephone of the availability of the deposited mail.

26. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient is notified via facsimile of the availability of the deposited mail.

27. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient is notified via television of the availability of the deposited mail.

28. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the carrier is notified via e-mail of the manner in which the recipient would like the mail delivered.

29. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the carrier is notified via facsimile of the manner in which the recipient would like the mail delivered.

30. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the carrier is notified via telephone of the manner in which the recipient would like the mail delivered.

31. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the recipient notifies a data center who notifies the carrier of the manner in which the recipient would like the mail delivered.